

## HB 3824 – adds “needle insertion” to the Physical Therapy scope of practice

HB 3824 is a dangerous expansion of the scope of practice for Physical Therapists that bypasses existing processes for licensure to needle patients. The Oregon Association of Acupuncturists is against this addition.

Insertion of needles is considered acupuncture under Oregon law ORS 677.757(1)(a), and can only be practiced by those licensed to do so by the Oregon Medical Board under ORS 677.759. Unauthorized needle insertion is considered “practicing medicine without a license” and is subject to penalties under ORS 677.765. This bill, HB 3824, contravenes existing law by allowing unlicensed practitioners to perform a procedure that clearly falls under the legal definition of acupuncture. This would be confusing for the public and very difficult for the appropriate board(s) to monitor and regulate.

This bill does not specify the amount or type of training PTs would undergo in order to safely insert and manipulate needles. As a licensed acupuncturist, I spent approximately 2500 hours in school over 3 years, with about 1,000 hours in clinic and lab courses so that I can safely and effectively needle patients. Physical Therapy Needling (also called “dry needling”) courses are often only 20-100 hours. Other healthcare providers, like nurses, receive a significant amount of training in inserting and removing needles, but they are still not allowed to perform dry needling/acupuncture. Why should Physical Therapists be allowed to with little to no training?

Acupuncture is generally regarded as quite safe, but there are some potential adverse events, like pneumothorax (when a lobe of the lung deflates), infection, and nerve damage. While there is a paucity of evidence about the safety of Physical Therapist-performed needling, the evidence we do have shows approximately three times the rate of forgotten needles and significantly more pre-syncope (feeling faint), and infection, when compared to needling performed by acupuncturists (see chart below).

There is already a licensure and oversight body in place for acupuncture. There is no need to duplicate this work, cause confusion among the public, and bypass existing Oregon law. If Physical Therapists want to insert needles, they should become licensed in acupuncture. Please remove “needle insertion” from this bill.

Author	Kim et al. (2016) <sup>2</sup> <b>Acupuncture</b>	Witt et al. (2009) <sup>3</sup> <b>Acupuncture</b>	Boyce et al. (2020) <sup>1</sup> <b>PT-needling</b>
No. of patients	80,523	229,230	420
Approx no. of treatments	801,683	2,338,146	20,464
Forgotten needles per million treatments	58	5	146
Pre-syncope (fainting) per million treatments	5	26	7,965
Infections per million treatments	2	13	97

## References

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- Witt, C. M., Pach, D., Brinkhaus, B., Wruck, K., Tag, B., Mank, S., & Willich, S. N. (2009). Safety of acupuncture: Results of a prospective observational study with 229,230 patients and introduction of a medical information and consent form. *Forsch Komplementmed*, 16. DOI: 10.1159/000209315.